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# Economic and Social Council

Provisional

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**Organizational session for 2000**

**Provisional summary record of the 2nd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 1 February 2000, at 3 p.m.

*President:* Mr Wibisono ..... (Indonesia)

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Organizational matters

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00-27309 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Organizational matters**

1. **The President** said that, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/77, the formal meeting would be followed immediately by informal consultations presided over by the Vice-President, Mr. Gerhand Pfanzelter (Austria). The Council was one of the main organs of the United Nations and its mission was to foster awareness of economic and social problems. To that end, priorities had been set whereby the programme for the coming 12 months could be determined. The strength of an organization lay in continuity and relevance. The Council would take those imperatives into account, especially in the framework of its coordination functions, by continuing to expand interaction and the exchange of information with its subsidiary bodies and to strengthen cooperation among its functional commissions. The work of the substantive session would be more effective if the Secretariat would provide a list of decisions and resolutions, and, where appropriate, the necessary budget information. The Council thus expected to continue to improve its relations with the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and to strengthen its central coordination function vis-à-vis its subsidiary bodies and functional commissions.

2. Second, in an era of globalization and rapid change, the Council should be able to take quick action in response to any new socio-economic problem, such as the recent financial crisis and various natural disasters. With only one substantive session a year, however, the Council did not have time to take the necessary measures; it should therefore consider the possibility of authorizing its Bureau to call a meeting or special session to deal with crises or emergencies.

3. Third, one of the Council's most significant initiatives had been the recent opening of a high-level dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions. That dialogue would be continued and strengthened, in particular in the framework of the annual meeting between the two institutions. The most fruitful approach might be for the discussions to address specific socio-economic issues, and for a joint statement to be issued after the meeting. The establishment of an effective follow-up mechanism would ensure implementation. In that context, the proposal relating to the establishment of a special joint team on development funding should be pursued.

4. Fourth, in the area of international trade, the Council should intensify contacts with the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to facilitate greater coherence and understanding between the economic and trade sectors. Since the Ministerial Conference of WTO in Seattle in December 1999, cooperation between the Economic and Social Council, UNCTAD and WTO had become more necessary than ever.

5. Fifth, priority would be given to information technology, which defined the challenges and opportunities of the future. Information technology could promote equality in the field of economic growth and development and narrow the gap between the developed and the developing countries, but it could also have the opposite effect. Accordingly, it was important to ensure that it would benefit all humankind. It was essential to heighten awareness of information technology and its applications, and to disseminate an understanding of the fact that it was crucial to growth and development.

6. During the lead-up to the high-level segment, a series of panel discussions on information technology and development would be held in New York, as well as, if possible, regional dialogues co-sponsored by the Council and the regional economic commissions. Ideally, those discussions should include representatives of Governments and the private sector, and should be characterized by balanced participation by developed and developing countries.

7. Moreover, the Council would organize an exhibition on information technology that would disseminate information on currently available technologies and showcase their applicability to development. The exhibition should facilitate intergovernmental cooperation and cooperation with the private sector. To ensure that the work and activities were adequately followed up, consideration should be given at the high-level segment to the establishment of a permanent coordination centre on information technology, under the jurisdiction of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, or, alternatively, to the use of an existing

Council body for that purpose. National liaison centres, such as information centres, should also be supported.

8. In conclusion, he said that, as most major conferences and summit meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations dealt with intersectoral matters and had similar objectives, it was essential to rationalize their working methods and take practical measures without delay with a view to coordinating the implementation of decisions taken at those conferences and monitoring the progress achieved at all levels.

9. With respect to the organization of the work of the session, the Bureau had allocated responsibilities at a meeting held the previous day. The President would be responsible for the high-level debate; Mr. Bernd Niehaus (Costa Rica) would be responsible for operational activities, Mr. Vladimir Sotirov (Bulgaria) for humanitarian affairs, Mr. Gerhard Pfanzelter (Austria) for coordination, and Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) for the general debate. The Bureau had drawn up a list of the questions before the Council at its organizational session, but any delegation could add an agenda item if it so desired.

*The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.*